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# Advice and Information for Parents and Others Regarding Diphtheria Prevention

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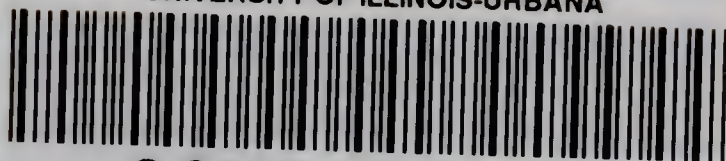
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STATE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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# WHAT DIPHTHERIA

Diphtheria killed 470 persons in Illinois in 1924 and caused 6,859 cases of illness. In all of these persons were children less than 15 years old. Usually there are more than 15,000 cases and more than 1,000 deaths annually from diphtheria in Illinois. Diphtheria is distinctly a childhood disease, more than 85 per cent of the cases and deaths occurring among children under 8 years of age.

## Ignorance and Carelessness Cause Diphtheria

Diphtheria can positively be prevented. Three injections of toxin-antitoxin will make children immune to diphtheria just the same as vaccination will make them immune to smallpox.

Parents who do not know this permit their children to run the risk of catching diphtheria because of ignorance. Parents who do know that toxin-antitoxin will prevent diphtheria and do not give their children the advantage of this protection permit them to run the risk of catching diphtheria because of wilful carelessness or indifference.

## Why Toxin-antitoxin Should be Used

The use of toxin-antitoxin to prevent diphtheria is a thoroughly scientific procedure. It is endorsed and recommended by leading physicians and by official public health authorities.

If given to young children, toxin-antitoxin will establish an immunity to diphtheria which will continue during all the years when this disease is most likely to occur. (In other words, it will do for the child exactly what nature does for most folks in the course of time. It amounts simply to hastening the work of nature.)



Parents who wish to have their children immunized should take the matter up with their physician. Hand him a copy of this leaflet and tell him about it. The State Department of Public Health works through physicians altogether in connection with this service.

### **Who Should be Immunized**

Every healthy child between six months and eight years of age should be immunized against this disease. If this were done, diphtheria would soon disappear. There is no objection to giving toxin-antitoxin to older children but many of them have already developed a natural immunity and have passed through the period of most danger from diphtheria.

### **Proof of Results from Toxin-antitoxin**

In the fraternity school at Mooseheart, Illinois where more than 1000 children are enrolled, the medical director began immunizing all children with toxin-antitoxin in 1920. Since that year not a single case of diphtheria has occurred among the pupils of the school, although they were definitely exposed to the disease on a number of occasions. Prior to that year there were from 16 to 50 cases among the pupils yearly. Many other institutions throughout the country and a few cities have reported results like that at Mooseheart.

### **Protect Your Children**

Toxin-antitoxin is given hypodermically in three doses at intervals of one week. The full course takes two weeks. Immunity against diphtheria follows in from three to six months.

Protect your children against this treacherous disease. DO IT NOW.

...the no...  
...toxin. It sometimes causes ...  
...ally for a day or two but this rarely hap-  
...s to children under eight years old and child-  
...ren are the ones who need it most.

### **When Toxin-antitoxin Should be Given**

Toxin-antitoxin should be given to children as soon as practical after six months of age. Prior to that date they do not need it because of a temporary natural immunity. If given at six months of age, ample time is allowed for the toxin-antitoxin to establish immunity before excessive exposure to diphtheria.

It does no immediate good to give toxin-antitoxin to children after they have been exposed to diphtheria because it usually takes from three to six months for the immunity to become established. Obviously the most practical time to give the toxin-antitoxin is when no diphtheria is present in the community.

After definite exposure to diphtheria or in the face of an epidemic children may be temporarily protected by giving them antitoxin. This product gives immediate protection but the immunity lasts but a few weeks and in no sense serves the purpose of toxin-antitoxin.

### **What Immunization Against Diphtheria Costs**

The State Department of Public Health distributes toxin-antitoxin to citizens of Illinois FREE of cost. The only cost of immunization to parents is the physician's fee. Any physician in the State may secure a supply of toxin-antitoxin upon request, the only condition being that he arrange for 20 or more immunizations at one time.